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Cobie Smulders acts out on 'Friends from College.' 18

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Philadelphia hopes a pair of new city programs will encourage urban kids to get back to nature. 4

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MCCAIN RECOVERS FROM SURGERY, VOTE DELAYED

1 The U.S. Senate will delay its consideration of healthcare legislation while Arizona Republican Sen. John McCain recuperates from surgery, Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell said. McCain's absence cast doubt on whether the Senate would be able to pass the legislation to dismantle and replace Obamacare. McConnell needs 50 "yes" votes for passage in a chamber the Republicans

control by a 52-48 margin. "While John is recovering, the Senate will continue our work on legislative items and nominations, and will defer consideration of the Better Care Act," McConnell said in a statement.

5 CONGO RANGERS KILLED RESCUING JOURNALIST

2 Five park rangers were killed in a joint operation with the army to rescue an American journalist and three park rangers, who went missing in a wildlife reserve in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, a local official said on Sunday. Gunmen attacked the group late on Friday in the Okapi Wildlife Reserve in Mambasa territory. Some others in the group, including two Dutch journalists, escaped. Mambasa administrator Alfred Bongwalanga said security forces and park rangers had launched a rescue operation that located the missing members of the group. It was not immediately clear how the rangers were killed. "There are five dead. They are all park rangers who were involved in the operation. They had been backing the army," he told Reuters by telephone.

CHICAGO ANTI-VIOLENCE ACTIVIST GUNNED DOWN

3 An anti-violence activist and a 9-year-old were among 10 people who were fatally shot in Chicago over the weekend, the latest in a rash of killings that has shaken the third-largest U.S. city and raised questions about how to staunch the bloodshed. All told, more than 40 people were shot in Chicago from Friday to Sunday morning, including Willie Cooper, 58, who ran a South Side community center, according to police. No arrests had been made. Cooper was gunned down on Saturday afternoon by the occupants of a dark-colored car that had stopped as the activist walked near the nonprofit where he worked, law enforcement and local media said. "Willie is preventing violence, trying to find jobs for ex-offenders, working in this community. I almost want to name him the Mayor of 95th Street," one of his friends, Bamani Obadele, told WLS-TV.

5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

SHARK TOURNAMENT

4 A shortfin mako shark emerges from the water after being caught by Eric Kelly on the Kalida during the 31st North Atlantic Monster Shark Tournament in New Bedford, Massachusetts. The annual nonprofit fishing tournament brings fishermen from all over New England in search of shortfin mako, porbeagle and common thresher sharks. GETTY IMAGES

IRAN SENTENCES US DUAL NATIONAL FOR 10 YEARS

5 An Iranian court has sentenced a U.S. dual national to 10 years in jail on spying charges, Iran's Judiciary spokesman said, the latest case of dual nationals held on security charges in the country. The spokesman did not name the person or give details on when the sentence was passed but said the person was a citizen of the United States and an unnamed country other than Iran. "This person, who was gathering information and was directly guided by America, was sentenced to 10 years in prison, but the sentence can be appealed," spokesman Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei said on state television. It was not immediately clear whether Mohseni Ejei was referring to Nizar Zakka, a Lebanese citizen with permanent U.S. residency, who has been sentenced to 10 years in prison and a $4.2 million fine after he was found guilty of collaborating against the state.

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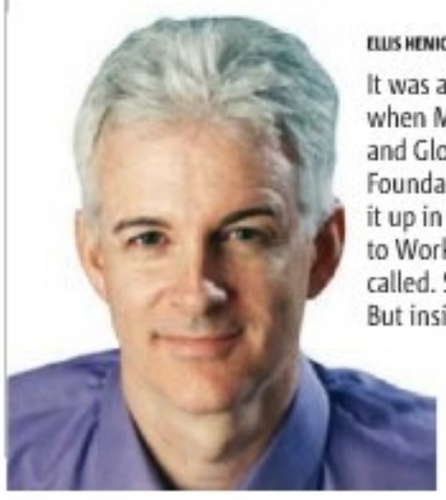

ELLIS HENICAN, OPINION COLUMNIST

It was a perfectly nice idea when Marie Wilson, Daren Ball and Gloria Steinem, at the Ms. Foundation for Women, dreamed it up in 1992. Take Our Daughters to Work Day, the concept was called. Sons were added in 2003. But inside Trump's White House, every day is Take Your Kids to Work Day.

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City officials join campers during this past week's announcement of CAMP Philly. HAYDEN MITMAN

Fixing Philly: Let's go play outside

With a pair of new programs, Philadelphia is urging urban kids to reconnect with nature.

HAYDEN MITMAN
@MetroPhilly
letters@metro.us

School's out and it's time to get the kids outside and active during these summer months.

But, in this day and age of binge-watching TV, video games and other indoor activities — this is where we mention the dreaded new fad, fidget spinners — children might be quite content reclining on a couch throughout the summer months without taking a moment to feel freshly cut grass under their feet on a sunny summer day.

In fact, according to Kathryn Ott Lovell, commissioner of the city's Parks and Recreation Department, "play" has become so structured, thanks in part to electronic devices, that children don't always know what to do to have fun outside.

"Kids today don't know how to play. Play has become so structured," she said in a recent interview. "It's not great, but it's the truth."

But, with a pair of recently announced projects, the city is hoping to get kids out in nature to play and to enjoy the city's park system.

The first is NaturePHL, a program that not only works to get Philadelphia's urban youth out into nature, it also allows doctors to prescribe detailed action plans for outdoor activities.

As detailed by the Inquirer earlier this month, "prescription-strength" play is intended to help improve a child's "motor skills, social competence, problem-solving abilities, and even eyesight."

The program, #naturephl, is a collaboration between the city's Parks and Rec. Dept., along with CHOP, the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, and the National Forest Service. It will begin as a pilot program in August as a part of standard checkups for children aged 5 to 12, at CHOP's Cobbs Creek and Roxborough primary care offices.

Visitors to the online site can put in their zip code and learn about the parks in their area as well as outdoors events that are fun for the whole family.

Also, earlier this week, the city announced CAMP Philly, a new program in which the city's Parks and Rec. Dept. has partnered with YMCA's Camp Speers — a 1,100 acre campground with a 36-acre lake, located about 2½ hours north of Philly in Dingmans Ferry — to provide children aged 9 to 11 a chance to escape the city's urban environment for a week long camping trip.

> *"I wanted to do something directly to get our kids out of the city and give them the opportunity to be kids."*
>
> Mayor Jim Kenney

"I wanted to do something directly to get our kids out of the city and give them the opportunity to be kids," Mayor Jim Kenney said in announcing CAMP Philly this week.

Through raising $150,000 in partnerships and donations, the city will be able to provide the program to 200 local children. According to Ott Lovell, a trip costs about $700 per camper.

In announcing CAMP Philly, Michael DiBerardinis is managing director of the City of Philadelphia, was reminded of Camp William Penn, a summer camp that the city had operated in Marshalls Creek. He said that the city ran that camp for decades, but "in the early part of the decade" the program was shuttered due to budget cuts.

"We just couldn't afford it," he said.

But, with CAMP Philly, he said, local children will be able to have a similar experience as selected children will be able to enjoy the camp and all the programming they want.

Organizers said that kids involved in CAMP Philly will be able to enjoy "archery, horseback riding, drama lessons and swimming, developing key skills such as decision making, creativity, confidence, and teamwork in the process."

And, getting children out into nature is important, said George Matysik, executive director of the Philadelphia Parks Alliance, in order to bring them new life and learning experiances.

"We help kids find their paths to new experiences," said Matysik. "That's part of our role, to get indoor kids to come outdoors."

And, he said, with Philadelphia's Rebuild effort to improve the city's parks and rec. centers right around the corner, these programs will help get children and their families out to enjoy the city's park system.

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From right, Donald Trump's wife Melania Trump, daughter Ivanka Trump, and sons Eric Trump and Donald Trump Jr. look on during a Republican presidential debate. GETTY IMAGES

TRUMP'S AMERICA

TRUMP'S AMERICA: TIME TO FIRE THE KIDS

OPINION

ELLIS HENICAN
@henican

It was a perfectly nice idea when Marie Wilson, Daren Ball and Gloria Steinem, at the Ms. Foundation for Women, dreamed it up in 1992.

Take Our Daughters to Work Day, the concept was called. Sons were added in 2003. And every year, on the fourth Thursday in April, a few million moms and dads took their daughters and sons to the office, the store, the factory, the bowling alley or the construction site. The kids got an up-close glimpse of how their parents made a living. The co-workers got to "ooh" and "aah" over the cuteness of each other's offspring. And on Friday, all the little kiddies went back to school.

Donald Trump got all of it except the back-to-school part. Inside Trump's White House, every day is Take Your Kids to Work Day.

Daughter Ivanka and son-in-law Jared Kushner have official positions. Jared runs about half the government. Some people call him the real Secretary of State. The president's two oldest sons, Donald Jr. and Eric, theoretically tend to the family real estate business in New York. But given their father's famous disdain for line drawing, ethical and otherwise, both young men are constantly dipping in and out of 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

The truth is, such arrangements are always problematic, whether the family runs a dry cleaner, a Chinese restaurant or the government of the United States. You're too easy — or too hard — on the blood-and-marriage employees. The other employees naturally resent them. And firing a son or a daughter makes next Thanksgiving dinner so uncomfortable.

So now look.

Donald Jr. is at the center of the Russian-hacking probe. He's dragged his brother-in-law in. Neither one has the background or experience to run a local Motor Vehicles substation. But how can they and the others be bum-rushed from the West Wing?

Democrats aren't the only ones demanding Trump fire the children.

"I'm going out on a limb here," said Bill Flores, a Republican congressman from Texas, "but it would be in the president's best interest if he removed all of his children from the White House. Not only Donald Trump [Jr.], but Ivanka and Jared Kushner."

Get back to class, all of you!

Metro columnist Ellis Henican is a veteran journalist, best-selling author and frequent commentator on CNN and other TV networks. Follow him on Twitter @henican.

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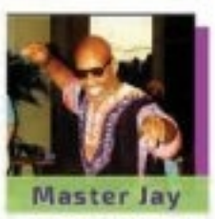
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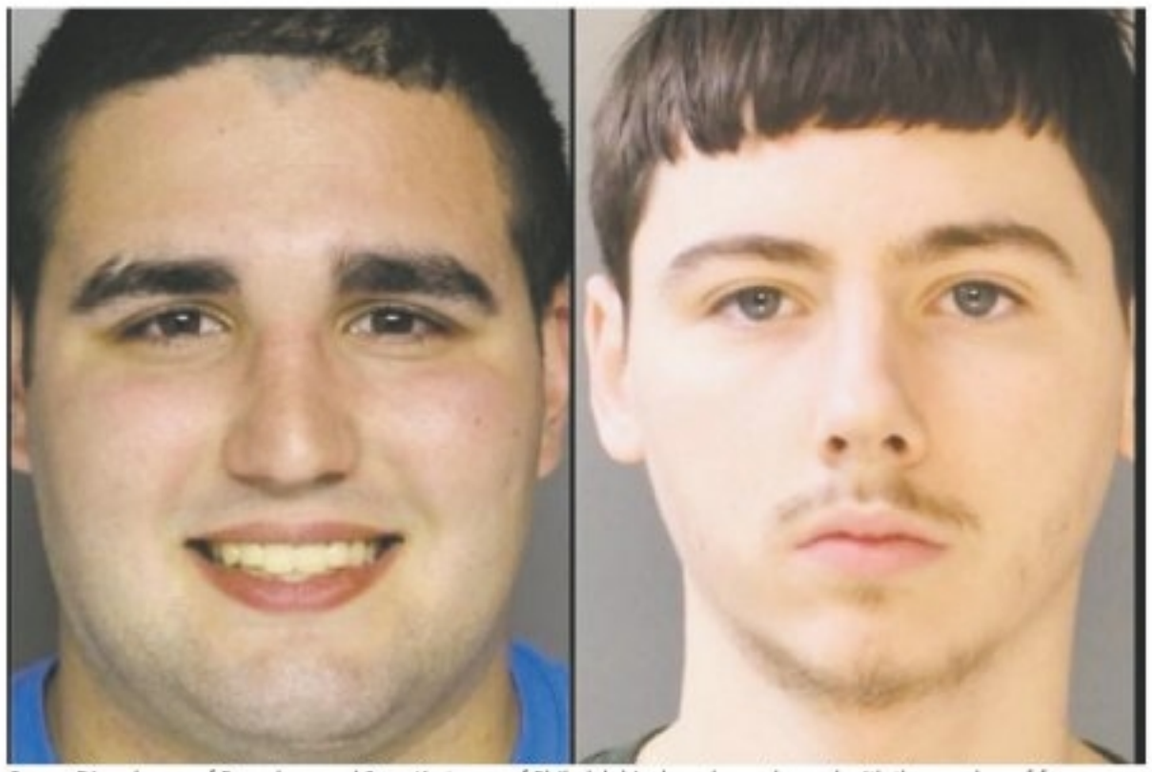

Cosmo Dinardo, 20, of Bensalem, and Sean Kratz, 20, of Philadelphia, have been charged with the murders of four men in Bucks County. PROVIDED

Two arrested, charged with the murders of missing Bucks Co. men

Court documents reveal how two men, described as cousins, killed four after marijuana deals went awry.

HAYDEN MITMAN
@MetroPhilly
letters@metro.us

The case of four murdered young men wound to a close on Friday as law enforcement officials announced they had apprehended the two men who police believe are responsible for the men's deaths and the disfigurement of their bodies.

On Friday afternoon, Bucks County District Attorney Matt Weintraub discussed the arrests of 20-year-old Cosmo Dinardo — who was arrested earlier this week — and a man Dinardo described to police as his "cousin," Sean Kratz, 20, of Northeast Philadelphia.

Both men have been charged with several counts of homicide, robbery, conspiracy to commit serious injury, abuse of a corpse and related charges.

However, the district attorney said that only Dinardo has been charged in the death of Jimi Taro Patrick, 19, of Newtown Township, while both will face charges for the deaths of Dean Finocchiaro, 19, of Middletown Township; Thomas Meo, 21, of Plumstead Township; and Mark Sturgis, 22, of Pennsburg, Montgomery County.

"I feel a lot of sadness. I feel relief. I feel so proud of my team and I feel resolved," said Weintraub during a news conference on Friday.

According to court documents, the men were all killed after marijuana deals went sour.

The documents claim that, in an interview with investigators, Dinardo admitted that he killed Patrick on July 5, after he picked the young man up at his home and drove to the Solesbury Township farm to discuss a deal to sell four pounds of marijuana for $8,000. When Patrick only produced $800, court documents noted, Dinardo instead offered to sell Patrick a shotgun for that amount and walked him to "a remote part of the property" where Dinardo instead shot and killed Patrick with a 22-calibur rifle.

Then, on July 7, Dinardo spoke with Finocchiaro and agreed to sell him a quarter pound of marijuana for about $700. When Dinardo was headed to Finocchiaro's home, he stopped and picked up his cousin, Kratz, and, court documents noted the pair came up with a plan to rob Finocchiaro instead.

The three then drove to Dinardo's family's property where Finocciaro was led into a barn and, according to court documents, Dinardo told police that Kratz shot Finocciaro in the head. However, court documents noted, Kratz claimed Dinardo shot Finocciaro.

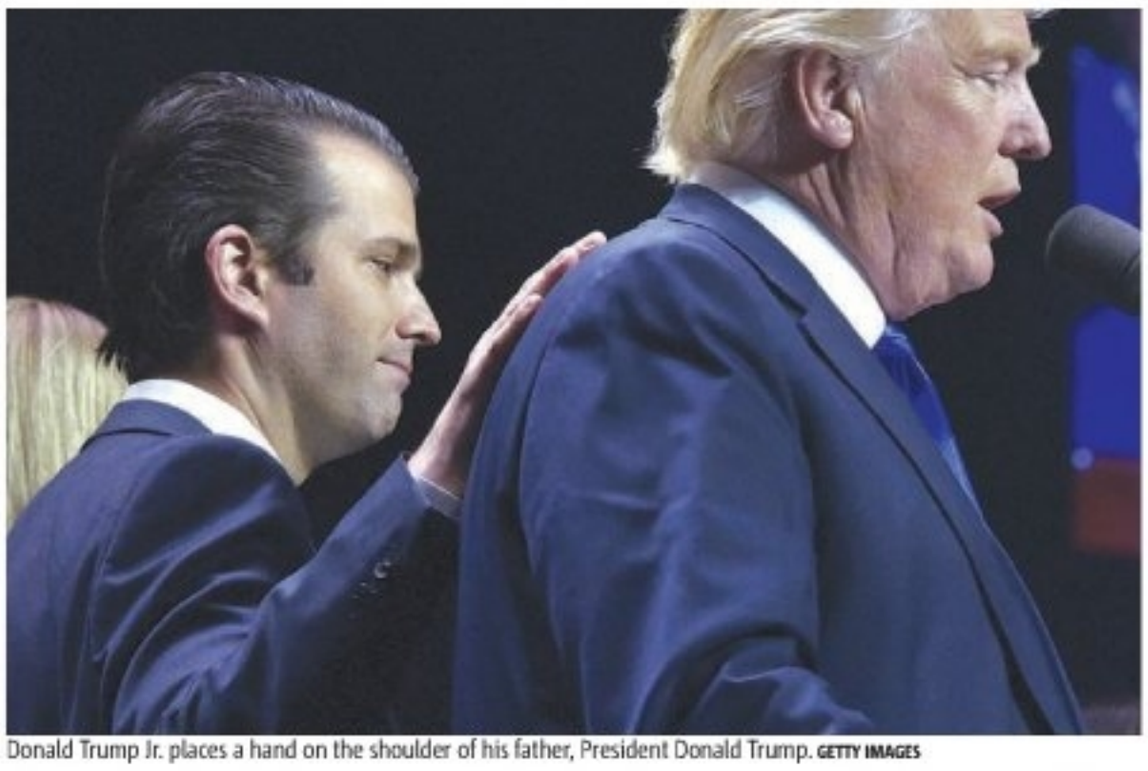
Court documents stated that Dinardo wrapped Finocciaro's body in a blue tarp, put the body in a metal tank he called "the pig roaster" and set Finocciaro's body on fire.

Later that same night, Dinardo went to meet Meo — who was with Sturgis — in order to sell him marijuana. While Kratz waited at the farm, court documents stated, Dinardo returned with Meo and Sturgis in a silver pickup truck driven by Dinardo.

According to court documents, Dinardo told police, "When they turn their backs on me, I shot Tom [Meo] in the back." Sturgis then started to run, but Dinardo fired at him until he ran out of ammo, court documents said, and Sturgis fell to the ground.

At this point, according to court documents, Meo was screaming in pain, and Dinardo climbed into a backhoe and ran over the injured Meo, killing him. Dinardo then used the backhoe to pick up the men's bodies and put them into "the pig roaster," where they too were burned.

Secret Service rejects suggestion it vetted Trump son's meeting



Donald Trump Jr. places a hand on the shoulder of his father, President Donald Trump. GETTY IMAGES

Donald Trump Jr. has acknowledged that he met in New York with Russian lawyer Natalia Veselnitskaya after he was told she might have damaging information about his father's rival, Democrat Hillary Clinton.

"Donald Trump, Jr. was not a protectee of the USSS in June, 2016. Thus we would not have screened anyone he was meeting with at that time."

The statement

The U.S. Secret Service on Sunday denied a suggestion from President Donald Trump's personal lawyer that it had vetted a meeting between the president's son and Russian nationals during the 2016 campaign.

"Well, I wonder why the Secret Service, if this was nefarious, why the Secret Service allowed these people in. The president had Secret Service protection at that point, and that raised a question with me," Jay Sekulow, a member of the president's legal team, said on Sunday on the ABC news program "This Week."

In an emailed response to questions about Sekulow's comments, Secret Service spokesman Mason Brayman said the younger Trump was not under Secret Service protection at the time of the meeting, which included Trump's son and two senior campaign officials.

"Donald Trump, Jr. was not a protectee of the USSS in June, 2016. Thus we would not have screened anyone he was meeting with at that time," the statement said.

According to emails released by Trump Jr. last week, he eagerly agreed to meet Veselnitskaya, who he was told was a Russian government lawyer. Veselnitskaya has said she is a private lawyer and denies having Kremlin ties.

On Friday, NBC News reported that a lobbyist who was once a Soviet counterintelligence officer participated in the meeting, which was also attended by Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and the president's former campaign manager, Paul Manafort.

The meeting appears to be the most tangible evidence of a connection between Trump's election campaign and Russia, a subject that has prompted investigations by congressional committees and a federal special counsel.

Moscow has denied any interference and the president and Trump Jr. have denied any collusion.

Sekulow's comments about the Secret Service drew quick criticism, including from Frances Townsend, who advised former Republican President George W. Bush on homeland security. REUTERS

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POLITICS

Collins: Eight to 10 Republicans have concerns on healthcare bill

Eight to 10 Republican senators have serious concerns about Republican healthcare legislation to roll back Obamacare, moderate Republican Sen. Susan Collins, who opposes the bill, said.

The Senate, which is delaying its consideration of the bill while Arizona Republican Sen. John McCain recuperates from surgery to remove a blood clot, will take it up as soon as all senators are available, Sen. John Cornyn, the second-ranking Republican senator, said.

McCain's absence casts doubt on whether the Senate would be able to pass legislation to repeal parts of the Affordable Care Act, Democratic former President Barack Obama's signature legislative achievement, commonly known as Obamacare.

Collins is one of two Republican senators who have already said that they would not even vote to open debate on the latest version of the bill released on Thursday, meaning one more defection from the Republican ranks could kill it..

Republicans control the Senate by a 52-48 margin. With the Democrats solidly opposed to the legislation, the Republicans can only pass the bill if all their other members back it and if Republican Vice President Mike Pence casts his tie-breaking vote in favor.

A Washington Post-ABC News poll published on Sunday showed Americans preferred Obamacare by a 2-1 margin. Approaching six months in office, Trump's overall approval rating has dropped to 36 percent from 42 percent in April.

While Collins said that she did not know if the legislation would ultimately pass, she said as many as 10 Republicans have doubts about it.

Republican Sen. Rand Paul also reiterated his opposition to the bill, which he described as "terrible" because it retained many of the Obamacare taxes and subsidies.

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RUSSIA FEVER!

TOM FOREMAN

Opinion

CNN's Tom Foreman is the author of the book "My Year of Running Dangerously."

While defending what many skeptics consider his indefensible decision to meet with a Russian lawyer a bit more than a year ago, Donald Trump Jr. offered this interesting thought — it was a different time. "There was no Russia fever back then. That was at the beginning of the campaign, more or less. There was no Russia fever," he told Fox this week.

For months now, I have marveled at the enduring oddness of the Russian kerfuffle. I've scratched my head over candidate-then-President Trump's unconventional cordiality toward the Kremlin, the weird alleged ties between the Moscow crowd and so many members of Team Trump, and the administration's insistence that any story about any of this is inherently "fake news."

So you can imagine how relieved I am to consider the possibility that none of it is real, but rather a vast, illness-induced hallucination spurred by a raging outbreak of Russia Fever. Now, I will grant that I have never before heard of this particular malady, but what do I know? Not too many decades ago, I had not heard of West Nile Virus, Zika or Lana Del Rey.

Of course, it must be quite the epidemic to have swept D.C. this way. Frankly, I can't think of anyone who has not been affected. I need only raise my blinds to see Democrats raging in the streets, Republicans scrambling down alleys, and White House staffers … well, come to think of it, I don't get to see them much at all since they rarely do briefings on-camera any more. I guess the outbreak must be particularly bad over there.

But alas, even as I consider the relative comfort of this whole notion, I fear I must set it aside. Because I know the truth. While nothing illegal has been proven against the president's team, enough legitimate questions have been raised to warrant a vigorous investigation. There is nothing fake about the need for that. Our intelligence services are convinced the Russians tried to meddle in the last election, and it is only right that voters know if anyone here was helping them.

And that's not the fever talking.

Cathedral of Saint Basil on the Red Square on May 18, 2008 in Moscow, Russia. GETTY IMAGES

How to Reverse Type 2 Diabetes

WRITTEN BY
Amy Smith

Diabetes is a commonly diagnosed, and often inappropriately treated, illness that affects tens of millions of Americans. What's more, the American Diabetes Association reports that the total cost of diagnosed cases lands at $245 million annually. Type 2 diabetes, formerly known as adult onset diabetes, occurs when the body fails to use insulin as it should. And more often than not, a slew of oral medications are part of the treatment plan.

But what if there was a better way? What if you could treat-and even reverse-your Type 2 diabetes?

Functional Medicine is doing just that. This holistic health and wellness method concentrates on identifying the root cause of the disease, an approach that differs vastly from the medical mindset of simply treating the symptoms. This whole-body approach promotes strategies to support natural healing, with concentration on how the body can heal itself when given the proper tools and removing toxic interferences.

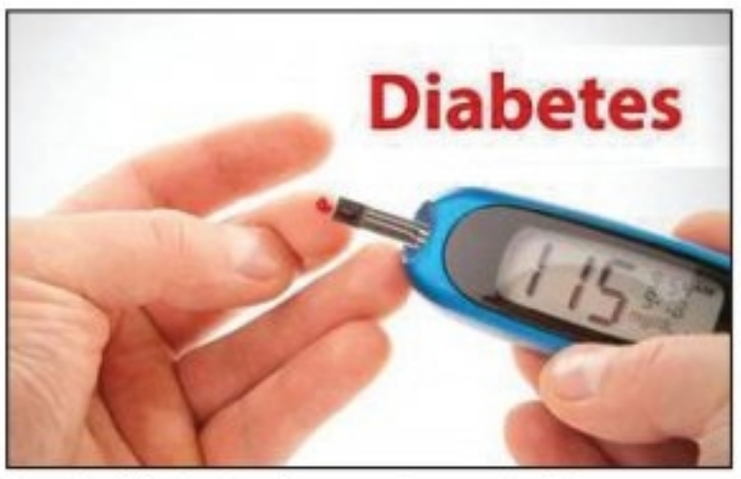
"Functional Medicine must be the future of our healthcare system," says Certified Functional Medicine Practitioner Dr. Rick Dunlap, founder of InSight Health & Wellness in Center City."As healthcare practitioners, we must seek out and address the cause(s) of a condition, and not merely chase after symptoms."

In that spirit, Dr. Dunlap is hosting a free, much-buzzed-about seminar on Thursday, July 27 called *Reversing Type 2 Diabetes*. Here, he'll be sharing his expert insights and wisdom on how patients can use Functional Medicine to move past their diagnosis and into their best life. The event will be held at the Sofitel Hotel at 120 S.17th Street in Center City from 6:30 pm to 8:00 p.m.

Attendees are in for an engaging, interactive experience where Dr. Dunlap will discuss new treatment options to help reverse Type 2 diabetes. This includes shedding light on comprehensive testing, why the disease manifests in the first place, and the most effective courses of treatment. The goal? To inspire patients to take an active role in their own healthcare. The seminar has been designed specifically for patients who are ready to tackle the root causes of diabetes so that they can finally take their life back.

"At my seminar, you'll learn firsthand the multiple aspects of diabetes and, more importantly, gain an understanding of the possible causes of your issues," adds Dr. Dunlap.

The foundation of Functional Medicine is eradicating the main source of illness so that the treatment plan is cause-centered. This refreshing approach is a



breath of fresh air when compared to traditional medicine's disease-centered focus.

InSight Health & Wellness is an innovative, forward-thinking practice that integrates holistic therapies and functional medicine to achieve overall wellness with a fresh, patient-driven philosophy. Every patient receives a tailored, individualized treatment plan. Customized therapy programs replace generic, one-size-fits-all approaches.

If you're one of the millions suffering from diabetes, now is the time to get back in the driver's seat and take control of your health- and life. Seating for the latest seminar is limited; reserve your spot today by visiting http://www.insightseminars.info or calling 215-564-6689.

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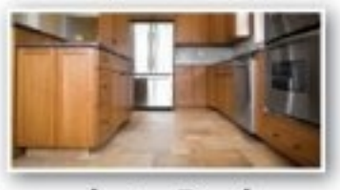

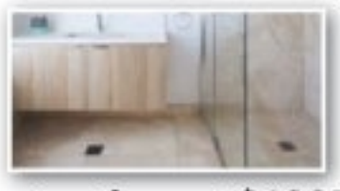

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Protests staged at US Women's Open

There had been calls for moving the tournament by women's groups angered by his campaign rhetoric and behavior they found to be misogynistic.

After three tranquil rounds at Trump National Golf Club, things heated up outside the ropes during Sunday's final round of the U.S. Women's Open as activist groups staged protests against U.S. President Donald Trump.

First local activists sported pink umbrellas on the warm, sunny day and spelled out messages written on their white tee-shirts as they posed in front of the Trump National clubhouse.

"RESIST!" was the message on the front as seven women wore one character each on their chest. They then turned around and formed the message "This is not NORMAL".

National group UltraViolet waited until they sighted President Trump enter his private viewing box that looks out on the 15th green, 16th tee and 18th green before revealing a message on their purple tee-shirts: "USGA: DUMP SEXIST TRUMP."

"Our shirts are our message," said Melissa Byrne of Philadelphia, a spokeswoman for the UltraViolet group.

"We want the USGA to dump sexist Trump because women and men deserve to make sure that they are safe and that sexual predators are not considered ambassadors of sports."

Before the four protesters showed off their message with another member snapping pictures, Byrne told Reuters that they wanted to look President Trump right in the eye.

"He saw us, No. 45 saw us, that we were out here and I could tell by the chatter and the way that they looked at us that they all saw us," she said about the 45th president and his staff.

Hope Singsen of New York City was one of those demonstrating for UltraViolet, who earlier in the day staged a motorcade outside the grounds to express their displeasure with the U.S. chief executive.

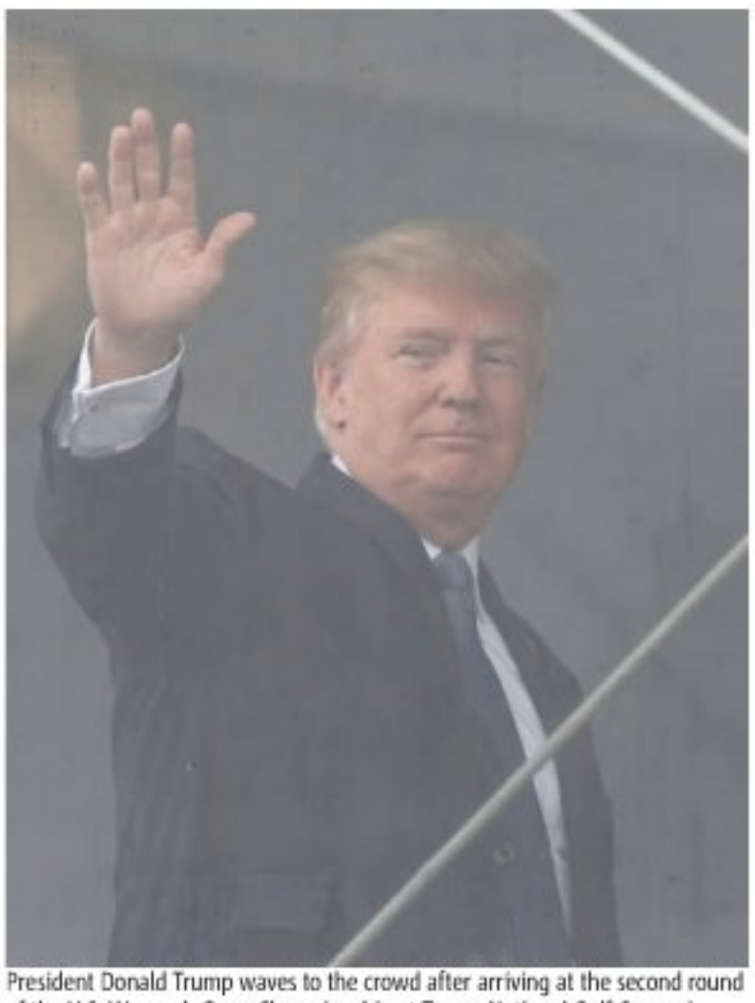
"Like millions of women and men, I am the victim of sexual violence," Singsen told Reuters. "I've been nauseated by the fact that somebody with this guy's past and pleasure in abusing women is in this position of leadership.

"Anything that I can do to bring about a change in that situation, I will be there doing it."

REUTERS

"Like millions of women and men I am the victim of sexual violence," Singsen told Reuters. "I've been nauseated by the fact that somebody with this guy's past and pleasure in abusing women is in this position of leadership.

Singsen



President Donald Trump waves to the crowd after arriving at the second round of the U.S. Women's Open Championship at Trump National Golf Course in Bedminster, New Jersey. GETTY IMAGES

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Central California wildfire grows as hot, dry conditions persist

A car that was destroyed by the Whittier Fire near Santa Barbara, California.
GETTY IMAGES

A damaging wildfire burning on California's scenic central coast was expected to expand on Sunday afternoon, with higher temperatures, lower humidity and high winds working against efforts to contain it, officials said.

By Sunday morning the so-called Whittier Fire burning near Santa Barbara was 36 percent contained, a reversal since Friday, when the blaze was 50 percent contained, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or Cal Fire, said.

Cal Fire bumped up the number of dwellings to 17 damaged by the fire after getting a closer look at the affected area. Most of them were burned in the early hours of the fire, which started on July 8.

The fire grew on Friday evening when so-called "sundowner" offshore winds picked up, pushing it into dry brush that has not burned since 1955, Cal Fire said.

By Sunday morning, the conflagration had burned 18,015 acres along California's scenic central coast, up from 17,364 acres on Saturday afternoon.

An evacuation shelter is open at a high school in Goleta, which is near Santa Barbara.

In the area of the fire, temperatures on Sunday were expected to reach as high as 101 degrees and humidity low, in the range of 10 to 15 percent.

The Whittier Fire is among more than 50 large, active wildfires burning across the U.S. West as forecasters warned that hot, dry conditions could persist, creating tinderbox conditions.

Flames have charred more than twice as much land in California so far in 2017 compared with the same time last year, according to Cal Fire.

REUTERS

WEATHER

Eight killed by flash flooding in Arizona, others missing

At least eight people drowned while swimming in an Arizona river when the group was overwhelmed by flash flooding that followed heavy rains in the drought-stricken region, the local sheriff's office said on Sunday.

Authorities were searching for others missing after the incident on Saturday afternoon in the Verde River near Payson, about 90 miles northeast of Phoenix, the Gila County Sheriff's Office said in a statement.

Local media reported that at least two children were among the dead. The sheriff's office did not give details of the deceased or those missing.

Sheriff J. Adam Shepherd said in the statement that a search-and-rescue operation was underway involving sheriff's deputies and the Arizona Department of Public Safety Ranger Helicopter, as well as members of the local Whispering Pines Fire Department and U.S. Forest Service.

There was also concern over possible flash flooding in southern Arizona, as well.

The National Weather Service in Phoenix said that most of Arizona was under flash flood watch until Monday evening, warning that "heavy rains can produce flash flooding of low lying, normally dry areas such as washes." REUTERS

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A voter casts his ballot during a symbolic Venezuelan plebiscite in Caracas, Venezuela, on Sunday. GETTY IMAGES

Venezuela opposition votes against Maduro, woman shot dead

The opposition Democratic Unity coalition said a pro-government "paramilitary" gang opened fire in Caracas' poor neighborhood of Catia, where thousands were participating in the opposition event. Video footage showed people scattering as gunshots rang out, many taking sanctuary inside a church.

Gunmen in Venezuela shot into a crowd of voters on Sunday, activists said, killing one woman and wounding three others during an unofficial referendum organized by the opposition to push for an end to two decades of socialist rule.

"The day was stained by the killing of a Venezuelan woman who protesting and exercising her rights," said opposition leader Freddy Guevara of the killing of Xiomara Escot. "But violence cannot hide what has happened. The people are not afraid and are clear in their decision."

Sunday's symbolic poll, which asked voters' opinion on President Nicolas Maduro's plan for a controversial new congress, was aimed at denting his legitimacy further amid a crippling economic crisis and months of anti-government protests in which some 100 people have been killed.

Maduro, 54, has denounced the plebiscite as illegal and meaningless. Instead, the former bus driver and union leader is campaigning for an official July 30 vote in support of the proposed new assembly, which would have the power to rewrite the constitution and dissolve state institutions.

The opposition cast Sunday's unofficial referendum as an act of civil disobedience that will be followed by "zero hour," a possible reference to a national strike or other escalated actions against the president.

Lines formed early at makeshift polling stations at theaters, sports fields, and traffic circles in the oil-rich nation of 30 million as Venezuelans furious over food shortages and rampant inflation sought to make their voices heard.

There was a festive atmosphere under the Caribbean sun in most places, with people blasting music, honking car horns, waving Venezuelan flags, and chanting "Yes we can!"

More than five million people had cast ballots at 2,000 centers, the opposition said, as voting was extended into early evening so everyone still waiting in line could have their say.

REUTERS

Inside the 'rapid advance of robotics' at TechCrunch's Robotics fair at MIT

Ned Desmond of TechCruch speaks onstage during TechCrunch Disrupt SF 2015 at Pier 70 on Sept. 23, 2015, in San Francisco, California. GETTY IMAGES

TechCrunch Sessions: Robotics is bringing all things 'bots to a one-day event at MIT on Monday.

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The future is now, and it may be most evident in the advanced world of robots. On Monday, some of the top players in the robotics field will come together at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for TechCrunch Sessions: Robotics, a one-day event. There, experts will talk everything bots, from "building the robot brain" to robots' role in humanity, as well as conduct workshops and show off demos of the latest working robots.

Ned Desmond, COO of TechCrunch, gave a rundown of what to expect at the event and what robots mean for our future.

How does this event compare to others TechCrunch has done?
Ned Desmond: The startup world has spread to an ever increasing number of categories and it has become impossible to address them all in a meaningful way in our larger Disrupt events, which we hold three times a year. We are starting to break out some of those topics into one-day focused efforts.

Robotics can still be daunting or sci-fi to many people. What do you say to them, and what is the future of robotics that you see?
The rapid advance of robotics is inevitable, and to some extent just an ambient presence in the world around us. Autonomous drones fly and fight in military conflicts and self-driving cars are on the roads. Robots in industrial facilities are moving out of cages to work side-by-side with humans. Robots to take care of the elderly or deal with basic home care are also a reality.

For the most part, it's hard to argue that any of this is troubling because it's all in the service making our lives better and safer. The fears of a sci-fi nature tend to revolve around the idea of a superior AI capability that might make robots "smarter" than humans and result in unknown consequences. That's a real issue and we will discuss that it at the show.

What area of robotics is set to grow the fastest (i.e., autonomy, drones, etc.)?
Great question! That's very much on the minds of the VCs and entrepreneurs at the show. Warehouse robotics is a very big category, as are collaborative robotics, which are the new generation of machines in the workplace and factories. Those are huge markets. Medical robots are hugely varied in type but also very important.

Is this event just for those trying to enter the world of robotics, or can anyone get something out of it?
The robotics scene, broadly speaking, is going to be a huge employer in the years ahead. The jobs will encompass everything from developers and fabricators to repair people, sales and marketing and operations folks. The opportunities are huge.

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Televisiting maintains family connections during incarceration

"It kept me and my daughter's bond — and it kept her looking forward to her dad returning," one formerly incarcerated father said.

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The sounds of a pizza party, complete with cheerful children and laughter, spilled out into the hallway. The revelry was akin to an everyday family gathering — except some guests were attending remotely from a local prison.

The gathering was part of the New York Society for Ethical Culture's Supportive Televisiting Services, a program that keeps children and their incarcerated parents connected. Studies have shown that such visits can reduce behavioral, emotional or other issues a child may have while separated from their parents.

"A big part of this program is to encourage the participation of the incarcerated person in their family and to give them the confidence they're part of the family, they're welcome in the family and ease the transition back into the community," said Richard Koral, leader of Ethical NYC.

And there is a reason it's called "visiting" and not "visitation."

"'Visitation' has a legalese to it. Visiting is like something you do with your grandmother," explained Dr. Frank J. Corigliano, the psychologist who runs the program.

The 45-minute visits, which take place at Ethical NYC on the Upper West Side, are "critical to maintaining family connections and giving parents and children the best possible chances of creating and maintaining strong family bonds," he added.

That is exactly what happened with Darrell, a father who took part in the program with his then-8-year-old daughter for the four months he was incarcerated.

"It was extremely helpful and very important for both of us to be able to see each other more conveniently," he said. "It helped us keep hope and kept me in a positive frame of mind."

Additionally, the visits "kept her looking forward to her dad returning," Darrell said.

Richard Koral, left, and Dr. Frank Corigliano, who runs Ethical NYC's Supportive Televisiting Services. NIKKI M. MASCALI

Ethical NYC's supportive televisiting service began in 2011 with Albion Correctional Facility for women and soon expanded throughout New York City's Department of Corrections system. Corigliano also launched library-based televisits and offers training for other organizations that want to develop programs as well.

He also works closely with the DOC to identify and have prep sessions with participating parents, and either he or a social work intern are in the televisiting room at all times, "so it's always supported," Corigliano added.

The kid-friendly room, which was redesigned with help from Darrell's daughter, features a high-definition TV, a comfy sofa, books, artwork and lots of stuffed animals.

During visits, Corligiano uses "family language," like the aforementioned "visiting" over "visitation," "supportive" over "supervised" and "parent" instead of "inmate."

"Suddenly you have someone who is an inmate and a number who is defined by what their charge was to a mom or dad who gets to show up for their kid," he said.

Since inception, the program has kept more than 100 kids connected to their parents with visits ranging from birthday parties to homework sessions.

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Aaron Carter was arrested, of course

Aaron Carter — a man in the midst of an infinite battle for relevancy — is in the news again for being a hot mess.

The former teenybopper and little brother of Nick Carter was arrested on DUI and marijuana charges on Saturday night. According to People, the 29-year-old was pulled over around 9 p.m. in Habersham County, Georgia, which

Typical him!

is a hop, a skip and 90 miles north from Atlanta.

Carter refused to undergo a breathalyzer and drug test, as you do, and was charged with driving under the influence, possession of less than one ounce of marijuana and possession of drug-related objects. Because if you got the weed, you need something to smoke it out of, duh.

Because of said arrest, Carter was unable to make a performance in Kansas City, to the chagrin of what I assume was approximately 10 fans.

Prince Harry's BFF spills the beans

Another day, another tiny little morsel about the maybe future marriage of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle. And this time, it's personal.

Well, when I say personal, I just mean that someone close to Harry is dropping hints like they're hot.

The Daily Star reports that former U.S. marine Kirstie Ennis, who has been old friends with Harry for five years, confirmed she's expecting a royal wedding between Harry and Markle. Sure!

When asked if she expects Harry

Just another tiny little morsel.

to pop the question soon, Ennis nodded. She nodded! Stop the damn presses because a woman nodded her head.

Honestly, if these two could just go ahead and actually get engaged, I would really appreciate it. Like, I know Prince Harry an Meghan Markle aren't thinking about me, exactly?

But I would super appreciate it.

Cameron Diaz & Drew Barrymore are besties

Drew Barrymore and Cameron Diaz, two rich ladies who act sometimes, are best friends. And they have been since "Charlie's Angels," a movie that came out in 2000 that I, as a youth, was obsessed with.

Barrymore and Diaz spent some cute quality time together over the weekend, and 42-year-old Barrymore was touched in her heart parts so much so, that she dedicated an entire Instagram post to her. Aw!

"Remember to spend a moment with the ones you love in your busy life. She has made me feel beyond beautiful. Always has. Always will."

That's a really cute tribute and all, but also? I don't mean to be rude, but I saw "Charlie's Angels." And I, for one, think that it's rude that Lucy Liu wasn't invited to this best friendship.

Aw, besties!

Won't someone think of Lucy?

Ariel Winter slams body shamers, again

Ariel Winter is clapping back at some body shamers via Twitter, and I can't even believe this is a thing. Why random people think they have the right to police other random people's bodies, I shall never understand.

After getting some flak from commenters, Winter took to Twitter to remind everyone to mind their dang business with tasty little rant. "Pretty annoyed about the focus on the fact that I wear shorts, and the commentary that I'm 'squeezing' into them or the idea that it's not OK for me to wear shorts," she wrote. "Please leave young women alone," she continued.

"We're just living our lives." For real, for real though. Can we just let the young ones live? There's plenty more to focus our efforts on like, I don't know, climate change and Trump's rampant sexism. Priorities, man.

You tell 'em.

Cobie Smulders like playing a bad xennial

The "How I Met Your Mother" actress stars in 'Friends from College."

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Cobie Smulders in "Friends from College"
NETFLIX

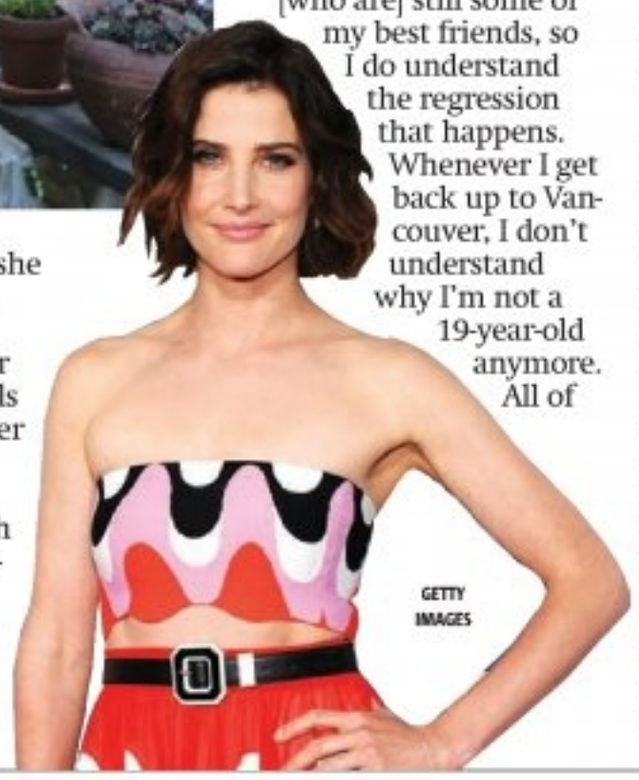
Cobie Smulders is back on a TV comedy, this time, playing a xennial whose life is about to blow up.

On Netflix's new eight-part series "Friends from College," the 35-year-old plays Lisa, the most sympathetic in a group of immature old college friends who never really got over their glory days at Harvard (cue eye-roll), although they're now approaching 40.

When Lisa and her husband, Ethan (Keegan-Michael Key), join the gang in New York City, the former ACLU lawyer has landed a higher-paying gig at a misogynistic hedge fund to support Ethan, who's "working on a new novel" but really spends his time having an affair with their mutual friend Sam (Annie Parisse). Lisa, meanwhile suffers through the emotional and physical pains of her first IVF cycle.

But Lisa isn't blameless for long, Smulders teases. At first, "it's very, 'Oh, poor, Lisa,'' says the "How I Met Your Mother" actress. But "once she realizes her relationship is not what it was, her whole world sort of crumbles." That's when the role gets fun for Smulders. "It's one of the reasons I was excited to take on this job, because this woman who is seemingly very together and educated and on this great trajectory, she just goes through the wringer and loses her mind and makes some poor choices," she explains.

The Vancouver native calls in from her home in Manhattan, which she's leaving soon to move back to L.A. with her husband, actor Taran Killam ("Drunk History," "SNL"), and their two kids.



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"Friends from College" is all about college nostalgia. We read that you never attended undergrad. Was it hard to channel that sentimentality?

I have a kinship with my high school friends [who are] still some of my best friends, so I do understand the regression that happens. Whenever I get back up to Vancouver, I don't understand why I'm not a 19-year-old anymore. All of a sudden, there's this weird time warp that happens. My current life, where I'm a 35-year-old woman with two children, doesn't make a lot of sense to me a lot of the time. [Laughs]

You've spoken about how, as a cancer survivor, you were initially told by doctors that you wouldn't be able to have kids. Were you able to tap into that struggle for this role?

Absolutely. Although I didn't have kids [via IVF], I did so much research [into it] when I was told I wouldn't be able to have kids. I have so much sympathy for women who have to go through it, multiple times, it seems. Also, the feeling as a woman, going, "This is something I've always wanted. [Having kids] is literally the one thing my body is capable of doing, over a man" — when that is taken away from you, it really changes your perspective.

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Steve Zahn goes ape

Turns out having to play a chimp in "War for the Planet of the Apes" is a little difficult.

MATT PRIGGE
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Roddy McDowall had it easy. In the old "Planet of the Apes" movies, the actor — along with the likes of Kim Hunter, Sal Mineo and John Huston — got to wear beautiful, elaborate ape masks. Not Steve Zahn. To play a chimp in "War for the Planet of the Apes," the actor merely strapped on a suit and popped an army of sensor-dots onto his face. Only later, with the magic of technology, would he actually look simian.

"If you go to a Halloween party as Zorro, you feel like Zorro, right? Because you've got the Zorro outfit on," he says. "If you went to the party as Zorro but without the Zorro outfit and people went, 'You don't look like Zorro, but for some reason you seem like Zorro' — that's kind of what it's like playing without costumes."

The third in the rebooted series is more intense and gritty than any movie in multiplexes right now. It finds that human-ape relations have become even more frayed than they were before. Zahn plays "Bad Ape," a traumatized former zoo animal who joins up with chimpanzee rebel leader Caesar (Andy Serkis) as he battles a psycho Colonel (Woody Harrelson) who wants all apes dead.

Zahn is primarily known for his comic-relief characters; our favorite is bumbling criminal Glenn Michaels in "Out of Sight." Bad Ape is sort of the comic relief, but he's no figure of fun. For one thing, he's called Bad Ape because that's the phrase he heard the most when he was a prisoner at the zoo.

"I found him really tragic, really vulnerable and accessible," Zahn explains. "You have these heavy, brooding, slow-moving apes, and then you have this little guy who's just really excited to be around people again. His friends are dead, his family's dead, he's become a hoarder just to fill the void of not having anyone around. I'm just moved by him. And I trusted that the humorous moments would just kind of happen."

The original "Planet of the Apes" movies, which started in 1968, were generally aimed at kids. (Though they were secretly very dark and political.) Like its two predecessors, "War for the Planet of the Apes" isn't necessarily for kids. It's nothing but serious, and it takes the time to flesh out its grim and unpleasant world.

"Usually movies of this size don't have patience. They don't have the guts to sit back and settle, to let you get invested in character," Zahn says. "Then you watch a movie like this, and Woody and Andy have a scene that's seven minutes long, between these two adversaries. All of a sudden it's like you're watching a production of 'King Lear.'"

It also reflects our own uncertain and combative time.

"It really is about what fear does," Zahn explains. "It talks a lot about empathy. It's about being able to empathize with beings that are different from you. When you don't have that empathy, you can do really horrible things to others. We can try to destroy each other because we've made others into something they're not. We have to share this place together. I mean, that's today, right?"

Up top, Steve Zahn plays the chimp "Bad Ape" with motion-capture sensor-dots on his face. On the bottom, the end result. TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX

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Over the years, Wallace has had students come from Pittsburgh, Connecticut and even Canada.

"Some people will travel two hours to get to class everyday. It always humbles me," he adds.

So what does it take to be a certified sommelier?

"You need to be able to identify blind grape varietals and regions and be able to describe the wines," Wallace notes. "That's the universal

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Keith Wallace is the founder of the Wine School of Philadelphia.

standard of earning your sommelier certification."

From Aug. 7 through Aug. 12, the class will run from 5 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. It's broken down into two sections: "Foundations" and "Intermediate," and includes a break between.

"The first part is all about the grape varietals. The second part covers the wine regions like Bordeaux, Burgundy, Napa Valley and what it is that these places bring [to the wine]," Wallace says. "The hardest part is staying sober."

On the last day of class is the exam. Wallace says the school has a 95% pass rate.

"The only people who fail usually are the people who think they know so much about wine and brag about their wine cellar to verify that they're a wine god," he reveals. "The people who do well have zero experience, really love it and just want to learn."

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Daniel Tang serves up French macarons.
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So many macaroon ice cream sandwiches, so little time.

These ice cream sandwiches are also available when the cold weather hits.

If you're a Philly foodie who loves Instagram, chances are you already know about the popular food truck Sugar Philly, which serves up only desserts. What you may not know is the story behind the sweet stuff.

Back in 2010, it was launched by three friends from Temple University who were hungry to jump into Philly's blossoming food-truck scene.

"We wanted to add something extra to the food-truck scene and thought it would be a great idea to bring desserts street-side," says Daniel Tang, pastry chef and co-owner of Sugar Philly. "Sometimes to get a good dessert you need to go to a fancy restaurant and have a whole meal. But sometimes you just want to eat dessert first."

In these uncertain times, eating your dessert first is most definitely a good idea. Sugar Philly has a number of decadent items on its menu, including cheesecakes and crème brulee but the star of the summer is most definitely their French macaron ice cream sandwich. A thick center of housemade ice cream is lovingly placed inside a larger-than-life macaron and it tastes even better than it looks on Instagram.

"We are already known for our French macarons, which people already loved, but summertime in Philly is hot and humid. It just made sense to start making ice cream," Tang says. "People went crazy for them."

Flavors include crème brulee, s'mores, passionfruit burrata blueberry, mango jasmine, horchata black raspberry, hibiscus melon, raspberry, maple cranberry cinnamon toast crunch.

"We have a lot of unusual flavors, but that's part of the fun. You can't get these flavors anywhere else besides from us," he adds.

If you'd like to try one for yourself, be sure to hunt down the Sugar Philly truck at 38th Street (between Walnut and Sansom streets), Monday through Friday from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Tang also reveals that there will be a storefront location soon.

"We are currently working on a storefront on Main Street in Manayunk, the opening date would be late summer or early fall — fingers crossed on that!"

For more information, visit: sugarphillytruck.com.

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College-admissions officers are stalking your social-media accounts

Strategic posts can help you stand out from the crowd.

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Social media is changing the college admissions landscape. ISTOCK

If you thought your transcript and college essay were all admissions officers were looking at — think again.

According to a survey by Kaplan Test Prep, universities are checking up on what students post on Twitter, Facebook and even Instagram.

But that doesn't mean they're simply scrolling through and weeding out applicants boozing it up with red Solo cups. In many cases, they're actually looking to discover more about students passions and out-of-school hobbies.

So how can you make sure you're posting things that will boost your chances of acceptance? We spoke with admissions counselor, Danny Ruderman to find out:

Post pictures

Applicants can spend weeks writing and rewriting their admissions essay, but words can illustrate only so much. Sometimes the best way to demonstrate character is through a quick snapshot. But that doesn't mean you should just post pictures of your cute dog. "Students should be trying to justify and expand on what they discussed in their application," says Ruderman. If you spent paragraphs detailing your love for sports, upload some pictures from the field. "Maybe your team just won a game, and the photographer for the yearbook took a picture of your crew celebrating, post it with a caption like, 'Shout out to my boys who just won league championships,'" says Ruderman. At the end of the day, you want your social-media accounts to reiterate and bring to life what you're trying to get across on paper.

Don't show partial love

"Colleges want to know that you want them," says Ruderman, but giving too much attention to one school might actually harm you in the long run. Even if you're completely adamant about attending Harvard, that doesn't mean you should be filling your time line with endless pictures of you decked out in head to toe Harvard attire. "All of the other colleges that check your page will go, 'Oh this kid doesn't want to go here, he clearly has his eyes set on Harvard, why should we even take him?' "And that jealousy will backfire come acceptance time. His advice: Don't post anything that gets too specific. You'll be much better off if you focus oh highlighting who you are as a person rather than identifying with any given school.

Be authentic

Admissions officers know that applicants have spent weeks, sometimes even months, trying to craft a certain image. The last things they want to see on your social-media account are robotic posts and triple-checked diary entries. "You also don't want to be like, #I'llbegreatatYale." It doesn't tell them anything about you. The best thing students can do is post about what goes on during their day-to-day lives, says the expert. If you're really into theater and just spent the evening performing a play with friends, upload a brief clip or two. The reality is, "admissions officers are trying to put a face to a name," says Ruderman. "They really just want to see the authentic person on the other side of the screen."

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How to land a job without prior experience

Many recent grads feel like they're in a Catch-22. They need a job to get experience, but they need experience to get a job. ISTOCK

There are ways to work around the system.

SARA FEINSTEIN
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Jumping into the job hunt after graduation is terrifying, especially when all of the job listings begin with "three to five years' experience necessary."

And while these requirements makes sense — naturally, employers want to hire somebody who has some prior training — not many students can tout years of experience immediately after picking up their diploma.

But that doesn't mean they're out of luck. There are plenty of ways to navigate this tricky situation and secure a job.

We spoke with Adrian Granzella Larssen, editor-at-large at career-coaching platform the Muse to find out how.

Redefine experience

Applicants tend to panic when they read job listings asking for years of experience, says Larssen, but they shouldn't. After all, "experience" isn't limited to full-time employment. Many students actually build up a resume of marketable skills in college through internships, part-time jobs, volunteer work and even leadership positions.

So how can they use these start-off gigs to boost their credibility? By "highlighting the experiences that are most relevant to the job they're applying to," says Larssen. Say you were a campus-tour coordinator and now you're applying to a sales job. Rather than just talking about your day-to-day duties leading students around your school, she says "highlight stories that show your abilities related to communication and relationship-building." In other words, strut what you've got — strategically.

Don't be afraid to intern

If you're finding it hard to get your foot in the door, an internship can be a great starting point, says Larssen. Just make sure you're not signing up for a coffee-fetching gig. "The ideal internships are the ones that give you some hands-on experience in the field you hope to go into," she explains.

Employers want to know how you'll perform on the job. Even if the application doesn't ask for it, submit samples of your work to show them what you're capable of.

During the interview stage, be sure to ask what types of projects you'll be working on to make sure you'll finish with an array of skills under your belt. Another good question to ask: "What have former interns gone on to do?, says Larssen. "This can tell you a lot about whether the internship will set you up for a good next step."

Once you've secured an internship, build strong relationships with the staff. Not only will that increase your chances of being offered a full-time job with the company, but it'll also set you up for future opportunities. "Even if they can't hire you, they'll be more likely to help you find a job elsewhere or recommend you for other positions," says Larssen.

Be bold with your application

A job application is your chance to put your best foot forward — so don't be shy. Say you're applying to a marketing job, don't just submit your resume and cover letter and shamelessly proclaim that you can do the job. Show them that you're qualified by putting together a mock marketing plan, perhaps even a slideshow that details a clever social media strategy, says the expert.

It might sound crazy, but it's worked before, explains Larssen. She uses the example of a writer who applied for a copywriting job and was rejected because of her lack of experience, but decided to make a case for herself. "She wrote back to the hiring manager and said, thanks so much for the opportunity, and also, here are 10 taglines I came up with for your company, free of charge — enjoy." The stunt landed her the job.

"Take a chance," says Larssen. You might not have years of experience, but if you can showcase your skills in a way that make a hiring manager want to give you a shot, go for it.

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Leier focused on winning job

The winger posted 37 points last season in the AHL.

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Taylor Leier has the right mindset ahead of Flyers camp. GETTY IMAGES

Taylor Leier has spent the offseason doing the typical stuff, giving his body a break from the grueling hockey schedule and spending time with his family.

He's enjoying the final month or so of that now before the real challenge kicks in: making the Flyers opening-night roster.

It won't be an easy task for the 23-year-old, who signed a one-year contract extension on Friday, but don't be the one to tell him that.

"I'm going to go in there with confidence and going to act like I'm taking that spot," Leier said over the phone. "I think that's what every person has to have for a mindset. There's a lot of guys and only so many spots, but my mindset is that that's my spot to lose."

Leier is coming off a campaign that saw him play 48 games in the AHL, posting 37 points (13 G, 24 A) while appearing in a career-best 10 games with the Flyers, recording his first career NHL point. Aside from an injury that sidelined him for a little over a month, Leier was very pleased with his performance.

"I'm definitely excited to be back and be around an organization with a whole bunch of familiar faces," Leier said. "I was happy with my year last year.

"Last year I got in a rhythm when I was up… I loved every moment of it and I felt a lot more comfortable than when I got called up two years ago."

Leier received positive feedback from the Flyers' management before being sent back to the Phantoms, and he felt he proved his "reliability" and he felt he "belonged." He hopes that he turned a few heads in the process.

The fourth-year pro will be competing with a surplus of skaters for possibly two open spots in the bottom six. Everyone from Scott Laughton, Mike Vecchione and newly acquired Jori Lehtera will be in the mix, along with a few prospects and veterans.

As Leier alluded to, he'll be approaching this camp in September with his eye on winning a spot.

"I'll be ready, physically and mentally," Leier said. "I can't wait."

FANTASY BASEBALL: TIPS FOR WINNING THE SECOND HALF

OPINION

KYLE BISHOP
@amoralpanic

With the All-Star break in the rearview mirror, here are some tips for a successful second half, no matter where you currently sit in the standings.

First place: Don't let up
No matter how large your lead may be, there's plenty of season left. Resist the urge the rest on your laurels. After all, you likely worked hard to get to the top. Maintain the good habits you've developed, and don't be afraid to take calculated risks when appropriate. If you play in a head-to-head league, be sure to monitor things like innings caps for pitchers and late-season prospect promotions that could make a big difference come playoff time. In rotisserie formats, keep a close eye on your competitors' strengths and weaknesses as well as their transactions.

Contenders: Every little bit helps
You're in solid shape, but you'll need to limit mistakes going forward if you're going to grab the gold. The best way to do that is to outwork your opponents. Check the overall standings every day, especially in rotisserie leagues. It's not just about where your team stands; you can often scratch out a few crucial points in the standings by making mutually beneficial deals that help another team at the expense of a rival ahead of you. Dealing from a weakness to improve or fortify a strength is counterintuitive, but sometimes the situation calls for it.

Bubble teams: Make a splash
Perched precariously on the edge of contention, your season hangs in the balance. Sure, you could stand pat. Maybe that injured star will come back strong and propel you to victory. Perhaps that first-half breakout will persist until October. But you could just as easily end up continuing to tread water while your rivals make moves and leave you in the dust. It might be better to change things up. Gamble on big names who struggled in the first half. Be more willing to cut bait on underachievers in favor of the flavor of the week. If need be, punt a category. You need numbers, and quickly; it doesn't have to be pretty. Tools like RotoBaller's waiver wire pickups list can be a huge help in identifying players on a hot streak.

Cellar-dwellers: Play out the string
So, your team crashed and burned. It's nice outside, you've got that trip coming up, football season's just around the corner … yeah, we've heard it all before. Nobody likes a quitter. Even if your championship hopes have flatlined, you still have an impact on the race. Even doormats can win a matchup in head-to-head leagues, or swing a category in rotisserie and points formats. Nobody's asking you to spend hours scouring the waiver wire or trade market every morning. Just do your rivals the courtesy of setting your lineups and trying to be competitive. You never know — a few breaks here and there, and you could be right back in the thick of things. After all, it ain't over till it's over.

Keep tabs on solid pitchers on teams that will be in the pennant race in the second half, like Boston's Drew Pomeranz.
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Kyle Bishop is a lead MLB columnist at RotoBaller.com. His articles are your secret weapon for winning fantasy leagues.

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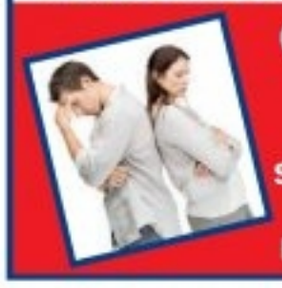

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1 Barge
5 Singing group
10 Harsh
14 Superman's mom
15 Shelf
16 -- -de-camp
17 Sharif of film
18 Ice-skating jumps
19 Dots in the Seine
20 -- oldie
22 Acidity
24 Large deer
26 Norwegian monarch
27 Surveyor's instrument
30 Hitches a ride
34 Big clumsy guy
35 Battery's "+" end
38 Eat soup impolitely
39 Colony member
40 Cranky person
42 Evergreen tree
43 Public tiff
46 Op art pattern
48 Mai --
49 Filament
51 Melodious
53 Miscalculates
55 Actress -- Watson
56 Tinkering with
60 Changes smoothly
64 Russian range
65Jeweler's lens
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68 Shop window word
69 Tempts
70 Ms. Bombeck
71 Writer Blyton
72 Movie double's job
73 Fine particle

Down
1 Tramp
2 Hunter's garb
3 Type of exam
4 Keeper
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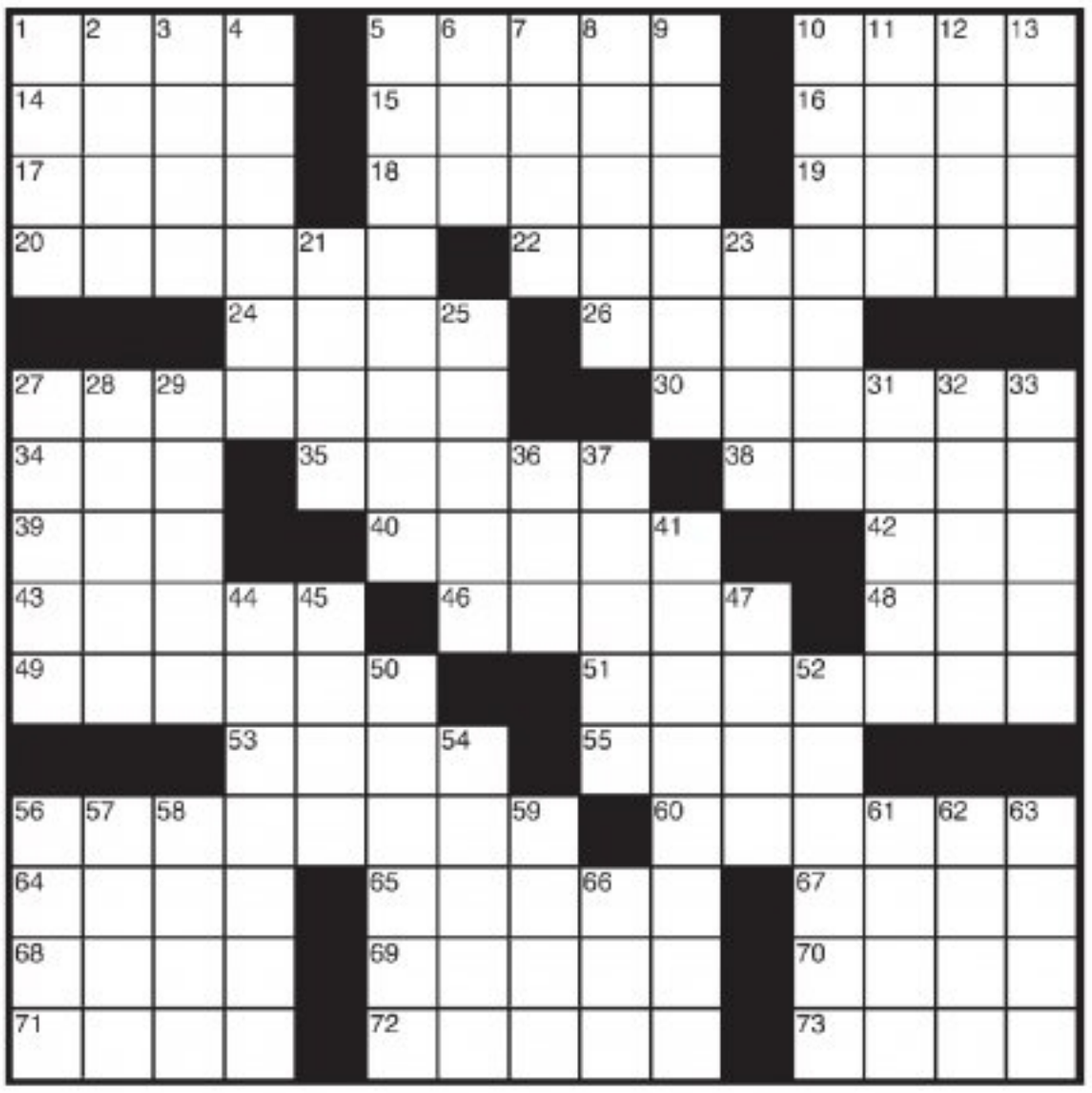

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easy

		7			3			8
		3	4	5		9	7	
		1	7					
3			9		8		1	
		6				2		
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hard

6		2	8			5		4
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9			6	7	8	4	1	
2	8							
					9			6
5		6			7	2		3

metro.us/horoscopes

Aries Your emotions will be difficult to control. An argument will lead to regrets. Turn your attention to doing something constructive. Engage in activity with a friend.

Taurus Keep busy. Don't let anyone throw you off your schedule by using criticism. Keep a positive attitude and concentrate on what you are trying to accomplish.

Gemini Suggestions will be made if you socialize or share information with your peers. Take whatever you hear at face value, but be prepared to follow through on your own.

Cancer You'll be tempted to act out if you don't like what someone is doing. Don't criticize or judge others, or you will get the same in return.

Leo An unexpected change of plans will make you feel uneasy or uncertain. Ask direct questions to gain a better understanding of the situation and how to respond.

Virgo Engage in discussions that will help you master a technique that can help you get ahead. Don't let love interfere with your professional responsibilities.

Libra You may want to jump into something that someone else has labeled a good deal, but a reserved attitude will spare you from the stress that such risk-taking could cause.

Scorpio Learn as you go. Keep your thoughts to yourself and consider different ways to use your skills to help bring about a positive lifestyle change.

Sagittarius Change can be good, but don't let impulse take the reins. Do your homework and find out exactly what you need to know to be successful. Take control.

Capricorn Take some time to nurture important relationships or to make noteworthy changes to the way you live. Making home improvements will be rewarding.

Aquarius Miscommunication is apparent. Be careful how you express your thoughts. Focus on what you can do to improve your appearance or capabilities.

Pisces Lend a helping hand, but don't let anyone take advantage of you. Emotional manipulation will affect the way you feel about someone. EUGENIA LAST

Yesterday's answers

J	A	B	B	A	■	R	A	I	L	■	C	I	T	E
O	C	E	A	N	■	E	U	R	O	■	O	N	Y	X
G	L	E	N	N	■	C	L	A	W	■	M	E	L	T
S	U	N	D	E	R	E	D	■	L	I	M	P	E	R
■	■	■	A	R	E	S	■	S	I	N	A	T	R	A
T	U	R	N	I	P	S	■	P	E	N	N	■	■	■
I	S	A	A	C	■	■	P	C	S	■	D	E	E	M
E	E	K	■	E	M	U	L	A	T	E	■	A	D	O
D	R	E	W	■	A	M	Y	■	■	V	I	R	G	O
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C	A	S	I	T	A	S	■	A	R	C	S	■	■	■
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E	D	I	E	■	N	O	I	R	■	E	L	A	T	E
S	E	N	D	■	S	R	T	A	■	S	L	U	E	D

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